

Supplementary Grants.

I. Land Revenue-Miscellaneous-Cranganur
Rs. 775.

Mr. T. M. Krishna Menon.—Sir, I rise to move for an additional allotment of Rs. 775 under 'Land Revenue-Cranganur'. This item represents a few items of expenditure which were not anticipated at the time when the budget was prepared. The total amount that will be required under 'Miscellaneous-Cranganur' will be about Rs. 1,175-3-9. The total grant under 'Miscellaneous' is Rs. 400 as per the budget. An additional amount of Rs. 775 and odd is also actually necessary in the interests of the State. The necessity for this was brought about in this way. The Cranganur Estate owns lands in Ponnani Taluq. A re-survey of those lands has been going on. Re-survey was practically over last year and settlement operations have been begun. On account of the re-survey we have yet to pay Rs. 175 and odd and bills have been received for this same. This is one item to be met. Another item is an amount of Rs. 200 required for the purchase of copies of the sketches of the different lands owned by the Estate for reference in the matter of raising objections, if any, to the settlement. That business is now going on, and we have to compare our register with the sketches now prepared and see if the measurements given in them agree and also the boundaries and raise objections if they do not. We also want to purchase certain books relating to these settlement and survey operations so that we may raise our objections in proper form. Rs. 52 are required for getting books and Rs. 500 for meeting the cost of encumbrance certificates in case of agricultural loans. Out of this Rs. 500 we have to pay Rs. 200 on account of last year's certificates and Rs. 300 for the present year. We get these certificates to see whether the properties are encumbered or not. And lastly Rs. 200 are required for meeting the tour charges of the Deputy Tahsildar. Altogether we require Rs. 1175 approximately for which the amount budgetted for and sanctioned is only Rs. 400.

Mr. C. A. Kunjunni Raja.—On a point of information. Are not these re-survey charges paid by the tenants?

Mr. T. M. Krishna Menon.—We have to pay this in a lump sum to the Government and we recover it from the tenants afterwards. There may also be some irrecoverable amounts.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—In those cases we have to take proceedings.

President.—In a way it is now intended to be advanced by the Government.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—May I know whether it was placed before the Standing Finance Committee?

President.—An attempt was made, but there was no quorum for the meeting. Therefore, nothing was done.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—When did the Revenue Officer place this matter before the Government?

Mr. T. M. Krishna Menon.—On the 23rd of Thulam 1105.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—All the applications for additional allotments that were brought to the notice of the Government were placed before the Standing Finance Committee. This was ready only after that meeting, which was held on last Friday.

Mr. T. M. Krishna Menon.—Yesterday also there was no quorum even though notices were sent in time.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—There was a meeting on Friday last. The Revenue Officer had already reported on the 23rd of Thulam. It was before the Government for one full month. Why this long delay?

Rama Varmha Tampuran.—It was not submitted through the Comptroller of Accounts and hence we had to return it.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—Even if it is returned, will it take more than one month? The technical difficulties may be overcome in a week.

President.—When was the Diwan Peishkar's report received in the Huzur Office?

Rama Varmha Tampuran.—We returned it on the 22nd November for re-submission through the Comptroller of Accounts. It was received back on the 17th of December.

President.—Now you know that the Huzur Office could not place it before the Standing Finance Committee as it was not ready. I have issued special orders that all these matters should be placed before the Standing Finance Committee at least one week before the meeting. Would it not be better to place this before the Standing Finance Committee meeting and then pass the allotment at the next meeting?

Mr. T. M. Krishna Menon.—I do not think that it will be possible to wait till the next meeting. There is only an allotment of Rs. 400 in the budget. We require Rs. 248 for getting copies of sketches and Rs. 175 for payment of re-survey charges, both together come to more than Rs. 400. So it is impossible to carry on till the next meeting without additional allotment.

Motion No. 1.

Mr. A. B. Salem.—*To omit the allotment of Rs. 775 for Land Revenue—Miscellaneous—Cranganur.*

Mr. A. B. Salem.—I rise to move for the omission of this whole allotment. On the first point that it has not been properly placed before the Standing Finance Committee, it may be good for the House to know—particularly in these days when legislators are not very full in their pockets—it may be good for the House to know how the Finance Committee did not come to meet. The President was good enough to say that an attempt was made on two occasions to call a meeting of the Finance Committee but they could not get a quorum. That statement being before the public, as a Member of the Standing Finance Committee, I feel it incumbent on my part to let the public and the House know why we did not meet, so that we may not be charged with a dereliction of duty on our part. What was it that prevented us from getting a quorum? That is a pertinent question that must be answered. We had told the Government during the last Budget Session, when we had 3 Standing Finance Committee meetings placed during the intervals after 5 p. m., that we were finding it very inconvenient to meet like that. But we said we would sacrifice our convenience and come even though it may clash with our Party meetings after 5 and even though we may have become tired by sitting here for the whole day, yet we would come, if the Government would make it worth our while to do so. The Government promised to make a note of this and said they would try to give us the sitting fee and asked us to send in the bill. All three of us sent our bills. We said that for additional work done we should be paid the sitting fee of Rs. 5. That would only come to Rs. 15 extra. If another Standing Finance Committee meeting had been called, the Government would have to pay the travelling allowance in addition to this. Government may choose either of the two views.

But bills were submitted and 3 months afterwards we got a reply that under the rules we are not allowed to draw this. We knew that. We pointed out that. It was also pointed out that such rules are not existing in Travancore. We always want to be following and not preceding. We want to be leading. Cochin is more advanced than any other part of India. Let India be led by Cochin. Now there is a Bill before the House of Commons for paying subsistence allowance to Members of Parliament who are getting only £. 600 a year. Only very recently we saw in the newspaper how a Member of Parliament swooned in the House of Commons on account of having only

one meal a day as his pay at £. 600 a year was not sufficient to live with 2 meals a day in London.

Therefore, there is no use in saying that there are no rules and sanction for giving a sitting fee. The rules are framed by you. You can frame a rule. The Comptroller is there to frame a rule. If I were the Comptroller of Accounts, I can frame a rule in 2 or 3 minutes. I will not take 2 or 3 days for it. Therefore, it is no real answer to the question. I may say that an Hon'ble Member of the Standing Finance Committee who attends may be allowed an allowance of Rs. 5. We have got a problem now that these were not placed before the Standing Finance Committee. Why was this? You could have avoided this for Rs. 15. Now you have to answer more questions.

Upon the merits I think I should oppose this demand.

President.—Do you raise a preliminary objection that inasmuch as it is not scrutinised by the Standing Finance Committee this demand is inadmissible? Do you raise that point?

Mr. A. B. Salem.—Of course when I look into the rules I find that it is not absolutely necessary to place them before the Committee. That is only a convention.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—May I know what is the quorum?

President.—Three.

Mr. A. B. Salem.—On the merits, of course, I put it upon two grounds, that is to say, when the Government is asking us to give a supplementary grant, they should satisfy us that this information was not before them at the time when the budget was framed. Normally miscellaneous expenditure was put in the statement as Rs. 200, and search fee for encumbrance certificates relating to agricultural loans is put as Rs. 500. So Rs. 700 was there by this item. No doubt agricultural loans have to be given and encumbrance certificates have to be obtained for these agricultural loans at the expense of the Government. Was not this information in the hands of the Government long long before the budget was prepared, and the normal miscellaneous expenditure of an office is also known long long ago. And, therefore, these two items are not items that should have come here now and that should have come in the ordinary framing of the budget of the year. No satisfactory explanation has fallen on my ears from the Hon'ble the Revenue Member as to why this normal expenditure with reference to the agricultural loans could not have been anticipated. They were the incidents of the office.

Mr. T. M. Krishna Menon.—The normal expenditure was anticipated and included in the budget, because there is

already an allotment of Rs. 400, and that included the normal expenditure.

Mr. A. B. Salem.—You have budgetted only for Rs. 400. Certainly no one with the information that they had ordinarily in their hands regarding the agricultural loans would provide 500 rupees. You know that you have to give more agricultural loans after the 70th Birthday. 500 plus 200 is 700. So that 400 rupees alone has been budgetted. Even accepting the explanation that 200 has already been included yet 300 rupees is unaccounted for. Then regarding the survey charges and the cost of buying a few survey books, acts, rules and other publications of survey records. Are these items of expenditure that could not wait till Kumbham? Certainly they can. Surely the Land Records Superintendent or the Press Superintendent would extend to the Diwan Peishkar the courtesy of sending him the books and sending their bills in Kumbham. If you are to take it even from British India, even then, I think, any office that supplies the books to the Diwan Peishkar will send in their bill and accept deferred payments.

Mr. T. M. Krishna Menon.—If you promise and give your word that the demand will be granted, I will manage somehow or other or even take the amount from my own pocket.

Mr. A. B. Salem.—How can we give our word of promise? There is nothing for us to speak on the merits. We had not sufficient time to scrutinise what the rules, acts and publications are. No details have been published. And even in a note circulated by the Government it was simply stated, 'cost of sketches,' what sketches, 'cost of rules,' what rules, and 'cost of other publications,' what publications? Nothing is said. We had no time to scrutinise them. Therefore, we are in the dark to say anything upon the merits. If there is a list made of acts, rules, publications, etc., then alone there is time for us to scrutinise and say whether the expenditure is necessary or unnecessary. Whether the acts, rules, books and the other publications are available inside the office itself, whether in our libraries we have them or not, and why should the additional expenditure be incurred, we are not in a position to say. Standing as we do without the scrutiny even of votable items of expenditure, this is the only power the House has got through the Standing Finance Committee. If that is also to be shut and all information withheld, then, I say, it is on a par with the nature of the answers to questions that are given, when without provisions in the budget large amounts are being spent. If without provision in the budget the Government is in a position to spend money, then why go through this course here? If your powers are so very wide that you can spend any amount of money without provision

in the budget, as has been stated by the Chief Engineer in answer to question 31 of the 17th of December 1929, where the Hon'ble Member was asked for a list of works over thousand rupees for which there were no provisions in the budget. His answer is adding insult to injury. We are here guarding the coffers of the State and saying that no money should be spent even by way of transfer without our knowledge, and the Government meets us, not half way or three quarters, but goes to the other extreme and says that we are here and will spend money even without provisions and will not give a list of such expenditure. The question No. 31 of the 17th instant is this:—

“Mr. C. A. Kunjunni Raja.—Will the Government be pleased to state the items of work above Rs. 1,000 undertaken by the Public Works Department in the last three years up-to-date for which there were no provisions in the budget of each year?”

Surely, Sir, normally speaking, this must be a very small list indeed. Because the ordinary procedure is that we have to provide and sanction the expenditure. Therefore, the list of works over 1,000 rupees for which there has been no provision in the budget must certainly be very small indeed. To admit that such works have been carried out and to give these answers, as the Hon'ble the Chief Engineer has done;

“The Government consider that the labour involved in preparing the list is not commensurate with the purpose served.”

Am I to understand that it will cost a lot of work in the office of the Chief Engineer or, am I to understand that it is the intention to withhold any information from the consideration of this House? I can certainly say that the list is indeed a very small one and the answer only shows the firm attitude the Government is taking in not taking this House into their confidence. When we ask for scrutinising the votable items of expenditure in the budget, that is denied. When we ask for the list of works carried out without provisions in the budget, you say it is too much trouble to prepare the list. What is the office intended for? Certainly to take the trouble. Whenever the Government withhold information from the public and from the representatives sitting in this House, it smells very badly. Do you think that these answers redound to your credit? Certainly not. These answers will only show that you are not prepared to face the public, and the answers you give only show your weakness. A notice is asked for as the last resort when possibly there is some real ground. But if you take the provision of notice in common with the answer that the labour involved in preparing the lists is not commensurate with the purpose served, then I submit you will be held up in a very bad light indeed. Therefore, I submit that, for consideration in order to move the Government on the

right lines, it will be the incumbent duty of this House to throw out this supplementary demand as a protest to show that we are not satisfied upon the expenditure at all. The items are unexplained and, therefore, there is no ground for sanctioning this expenditure which has not been scrutinised by the Standing Finance Committee of this House. In the light of what I have already said, and if the Government want to move on the right lines, it will be the duty of this House to urge the denial of this demand and leave the Government to their own action, to their own device to get over the difficulty, if there is any difficulty. Of course the Diwan can certify. But now-a-days the Diwan will think it difficult to certify. Therefore, the best thing is for them to carry on for another 3 months. If they cannot carry on, let them do as best as they can. And I think it will be the duty of this House to turn down this demand.

Mr. T. M. Krishna Menon.—Sir, I should like to explain the situation. Two objections are raised to this demand by the Hon'ble Member for the Jews. One is that it has not been placed before the Standing Finance Committee for their scrutiny. The reason for this has already been explained. And he himself has admitted that simply because it is not scrutinised by the Standing Finance Committee it is not inadmissible. The other is on its merits. Though I was anxiously attending to what he was going on saying about the demand on the merits, I was not able to make much out of it. How I understood the Hon'ble Member's speech was that he has got some general grievances against the way in which moneys are spent and that he raises the objection to give expression to those grievances.

President.—He wants specification for sketches and all that.

Mr. T. M. Krishna Menon.—With regard to specifications, it is not understood what specifications are required. Do they want the survey numbers of the lands whose sketches are sought to be purchased or the cost of each sketch? These informations can be supplied if required. They were not supplied because I thought they were unnecessary. The demand is not after all much. It is true that a portion of the expenditure covered by it could have been anticipated and budgetted for. But it was omitted by an oversight. Now what is the penalty for the omission? You may, if you will, find fault with the Head of the Department for it. The demand cannot be reasonably refused on that ground.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—This was not placed before the Standing Finance Committee. That is my objection. Whether it has the quorum or not, we do not mind. We object on a principle. If the Finance Committee were to meet every day of the sitting

so many supplementary grants may be placed before them. Demands coming before the Council without the scrutiny of the Standing Finance Committee are most objectionable.

President.—Sometimes we are forced to do so. After all we take 2 or 3 minutes.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—We have our Party meetings and taking our Members out of it is doing a great trouble.

President.—But we want their services only for a very few minutes.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—If they are to go through and scrutinise it, it will not be enough.

President.—There is not much to scrutinise.

Dr. A. G. Menon.—They have to scrutinise every item. I take objection to the supplementary demands coming before the Council without the scrutiny of the Standing Finance Committee. It is most objectionable and against principle.

President.—Are you pressing the cut motion, Mr. Salem?

Mr. A. B. Salem.—I don't press.

The motion was withdrawn with leave.

Question proposed. *That the supplementary grant of Rs. 775 under 'I. Land Revenue-Miscellaneous, Cranganur' be granted.*

Question put and agreed to.

Cochin Irrigation Bill.

President.—Then come Bills. The first is Mr. V. V. Anantapadmanabha Ayyar's Cochin Irrigation Bill.

Mr. V. V. Anantapadmanabha Ayyar.—I beg to move for leave to introduce the 'Cochin Irrigation Bill.'

Dr. A. G. Menon.—I beg to second it.

Motion put and agreed to.

Cochin Chief Court Regulation Amendment Bill.

President.—The next one stands in the name of Mr. M. K. Raman.

Mr. M. K. Raman.—I beg to move for leave to introduce the "Cochin Chief Court Regulation Amendment Bill."

Mr. V. D. Ouseph.—I beg to second it.

Motion put and agreed to.

Cochin Thiyya Bill.

President.—Next Mr. K. Ayyappan.

Mr. K. Ayyappan.—I beg to move for leave to introduce the 'Cochin Thiyya Bill'.

Motion put and agreed to.

Cochin Free Compulsory Primary Education Bill.

President.—Mr. K. T. Mathew will move his "Cochin Free Compulsory Primary Education Bill."